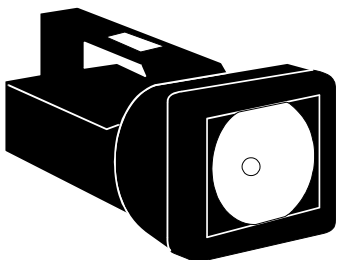




Checking Damaged Buildings

Safety Precautions in Entering Damaged Buildings

Use extreme caution when entering any damaged building:



- If you must enter at night, carry a flashlight or other light.
- If gas lines are broken, turn off gas at the meter or tank.
- Do not smoke or use any open flame.
- Watch for loose plaster and ceilings that could fall.
- Open as many doors and windows as possible to remove moisture, odors and flammable or toxic gases.

- If windows are stuck tight, take off window strips and remove entire sash.
- If doors are stuck, drive out door hinge pins with a screwdriver and hammer, and remove doors.



Foundations

If you are not qualified to judge the stability of a foundation, hire a contractor to make this inspection. A neighborhood might join together in hiring a contractor for this work.

- Examine foundations and supports for undermining.
 - If walls or foundations have settled or cracked, uncover footings and raise, reinforce or brace any settled sections.
 - Be extremely careful when uncovering footings, because of the possibility of cavernous washouts.
- If underlying material has been washed away, fill spaces to within 1 foot of the footing with gravel or crushed rock. Fill the remaining space with concrete reinforced with steel rods.
- Check piers for settling or shifting.
- If the building has shifted or floors have settled badly, temporary bracing might be needed until extensive work can be done.
- Drain any crawl spaces which contain water.

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Adapted by UF/IFAS from:
Document DH-056,
IFAS Disaster Handbook for
Extension Agents (developed
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Service for the benefit of
Florida's citizens)

Walls and Ceilings

- Wash out mud, dirt and debris as soon as possible with a hose and mop cloth or sponge. Clean before silt or mud dries.
- Start cleaning from the top floor or upper limit of flooding and work downward toward the first floor or basement.
- Check walls with a level or plumb bob.
- Brace walls where necessary.
- Check mudsills, plates, soles, and anchorage. Replace or repair where necessary, using redwood, cedar or treated lumber.
- Speed drying of flooded studding and insulation by removing all siding strips or plaster from upper and lower parts of the wall.
- Do not repaint walls until they are completely dry. This might take several months.
- Flooded insulation may be ruined.
- Remove all loose plaster.
- After house is completely dry, repair damaged plaster on walls and ceilings.
- Badly damaged plaster walls can be resurfaced with gypsum board or plywood.



Floors

- Flooded wooden floors will dry out slowly. Do not build fires to speed up their drying, as this could cause cracking or splitting from uneven drying. However, if the central heating system is operating, keep the temperature of the house at 60 to 70°F to hasten drying without causing additional problems.
- To prevent further buckling and warping, drive nails where the floor tends to lift or bulge.
- After floors are completely dry, plane or sand them level.
- If floors are too badly damaged to be refinished, lay a new floor over the old, or cover with carpet, vinyl or linoleum.
- If a concrete floor is badly damaged, break it up and install a new floor. If the damage is minor, patch with a rich mixture of concrete containing no coarse gravel aggregate.

Roofs

- Plastic sheeting or roll roofing can temporarily repair solid deck roofs covered with asphalt or wood shingles or roll roofing.
- Use knife-consistency patching compounds to repair minor leaks.
- You will probably have to replace damaged metal roofing on a spaced roof deck.